

NO BRIEFING

14 January 1959

CUBA

1. Despite anti-Commie orientation most govt leaders, Commies have rapidly exploited new opportunities and party no longer outlawed.
 - A. Commies' Popular Socialist party with 8,000-12,000 members, outlawed by Batista in 1953, surfaced immediately after dictator's fall.
 1. Commies have opened offices in Havana and Santiago; daily newspaper Rey has resumed; party held first public rally 10 Jan.
 2. Commies gained 5 representatives on 22-man natl committee reorganizing politically important labor movement.
 3. Exiled Commies returning, among them Lazaro Pena, top Commie labor leader and CTAL and WFTU official who has made many trips to Soviet Bloc. He is capable, dynamic Negro who probably retains much of former popularity.
 - B. Castro said 10 January that Commies will be permitted to operate as legal party "since freedom of political action guaranteed by constitution."
 1. A Castro lieutenant, the leftist Argentine "Che" Guevara, who controls an army fortress in Havana, was much stronger. He praised Commies who fought under his command, said they earned right to have legal party and he would not oppose their participation in govt.
 2. Way opening for Commie participation in elections promised in 18-24 months.

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3. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Urrutia and most colleagues anti-Commie but completely unaware real Commie threat.

4. On other hand, pro-Castro labor organizer has indicated aim of replacing thru union elections all Commies now in union office.

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II. Files of Batista's Bureau for Repression of Communist Activities

(BRAC) taken by Guevara to his fortress where Commies reported [REDACTED] to be active.

- A. Already indications that BRAC files may be used in political propaganda.

III. Since 1 January, 150-200 Cuban "war criminals" executed after summary trials by Castro forces.

- A. Trials and executions temporarily suspended 13 January.

1. New judicial regulations being prepared.
2. Estimated 3,000 awaiting trial.

- B. Govt defends executions in response to criticism US groups; Castro says executions necessary to "purify the nation."

IV. Corruption is so much a part of traditional Cuban politics that Castro will probably be forced to compromise his much-touted ideals and come to terms with grafters and reward his followers with pay-off.

- A. This would bring eventual public disillusionment.
B. Previous governments succumbed to corruption after initial idealism.
C. Castro has already OK'd opening of gambling casinos "for tourists only."

- D. Lottery tickets again openly being sold in streets